

The "Power Vacuum" Argument

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As I explained in my previous article, when confronted about the inherent immorality and illegitimacy of “government,” statist often fall back on making dire predictions of chaos and mayhem. Of course, this is logically irrelevant to philosophical principles. Reality doesn’t change itself to avoid bad things happening.

A: “Dude, don’t jump out of the plane, you don’t have a parachute!”

B: “Yes I do, because if I didn’t, this would kill me! Aaaaaaah.....”

Or...

A: “People can’t delegate rights they don’t have.”

B: “Yes they can, because otherwise there would be chaos!”

But there is something else worth noting about one of the most common dire predictions that statist flingers fling around. They basically argue that if there were no government, the horrendous, chaotic, violent result would be ... government. “Warlords would take over and build armies and rule us all!” In other words, the worst case scenario that statist predict for anarchism is ... statism. And that’s pretty damn funny. (“I’m gonna advocate this bad thing—a big, powerful ruling class—because otherwise we would end up with the thing I’m advocating!”)

Statists love to proclaim that if a certain regime or ruling class collapsed, was overthrown, or just disappeared, it would create a “power vacuum” and a new ruling class would magically appear.

Actually, in one way they are quite right about that. But in another way, they are dead wrong. The only reason “power vacuums” exist is because most people think there *should* be—and *has* to be—a ruling class, a supreme set of “law-makers,” a “government.” If, for example, Washington DC just fell into the Atlantic today, a new “government” *would* regrow, but not because of magic, or human nature, or because the universe makes them appear, but because *people who believe in authority* will keep creating new ruling classes.

That’s why I constantly emphasize the fact that the *belief* in “authority” (including all belief in “government”) is the problem. Whatever particular regime is doing the evil crap right now is never the actual problem. The problem resides between several billion pairs of ears. As long as most people believe that having rulers is legitimate and necessary, they will keep putting narcissistic sociopaths on thrones.



So yes, as long as the general population is stuck in the authoritarian mindset (“*Someone has to be in charge! We neeeeeeed a leader!*”), then when one regime falls, another will be built in its place—often one even worse than the one before. And yes, this is why violent revolution is utterly pointless without there first being a revolution of how people think.

HOWEVER, once people outgrow the superstition of “authority” and escape the statist indoctrination they’ve been programmed with, there will be no “power vacuum” to fill. A society of voluntaryists is not going to suddenly decide that what they really need is to be violently dominated by a new group of politicians.

Statists often talk about how some tyrant or warlord would just “take over,” while completely missing the fact that *their own belief system* is the *only* reason anyone can “take over.” They seem to believe in the existence of Hollywood villains, who are so diabolical that they can just make power magically appear. They don’t seem to know that every successful tyrant has to dupe the general public into seeing him as a *savior*, so that they gladly and eagerly give him control over their lives, and over everyone else’s. Mao, Stalin, Hitler, they were all cheered into power by adoring masses. Masses of ... you guessed it ... **STATISTS**—people who believed in “authority,” and thought “government” is what makes society and civilization work.



So in one sense, when a statist warns of the “power vacuum” thing, he is right, while failing to notice that he and his fellow statist are the *only reason* his dire prediction holds any truth. If the people don’t perceive the new gang to have the right to rule—don’t perceive it to be “authority”—then they don’t cheer for it. They shoot at it. And it dies.

And that brings up the whole silly “warlord” thing. “If we didn’t have government protecting us, warlords would take over!” Such an argument ignores the fact that warlords (and street gangs and the Mafia, too) are almost always funded by black markets created by “government” (e.g., the “illegal” drug trade). Without a ruling class, they wouldn’t exist to begin with.

But the “warlords” argument also shows a profound ignorance of human nature. It basically implies that, in the statist’s mind, the ability to rule doesn’t at all depend upon the *legitimacy* of those in power, in the eyes of the people. In reality, it has *everything* to do with that. Especially in a place where *a hundred million people* possess their own firearms, the idea of “warlords” ruling by brute force is just ridiculous.

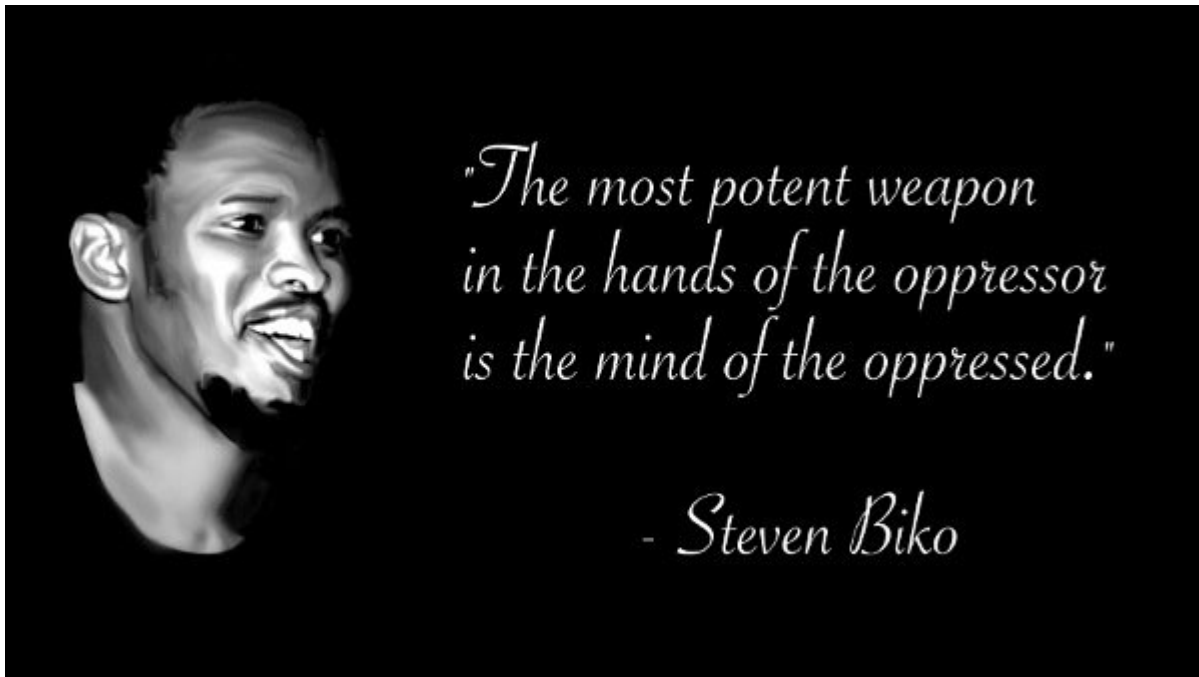
An example of private gun ownership in the U.S.:

Would you want to try to rule those people by brute force? I wouldn't (and not just because I have moral principles). An example I like to use is this: imagine that you are an organized crime boss, and your goal is to extort a hundred million people of a large chunk of what they earn, every year. You have 100,000 loyal underlings. However, only two thousand of them are armed; the rest are paper-pushers. Do you think you could successfully rob those people, when they outnumber (and outgun) your armed enforcers *fifty-thousand-to-one*?



Guess what. The IRS does it. How? Most of their *victims* imagine the extortion to be “legal,” and legitimate, and necessary. The victims feel an *obligation to obey* and pay tribute. If tomorrow they all stopped feeling

that obligation, there would be no IRS by the end of the day. That shows how much *perceptions* determine power, and how much political “authority” depends completely on the mentality of those being controlled.



In conclusion, there is only *one* gang with the ability to continually extort and control the American people, and that is the one that the American people imagine to be “authority.” In other words, the one gang that can dominate us is *already doing it*, and the only reason it is able to do so is because of the belief in “authority” infecting the minds of the general public.

We already *are* dominated by evil warlords. We already have been taken over by a violent gang. And, Mr. and Mrs. Statist, *you* are the cause; *your* belief system is what gives politicians all of their power. So when you whine at voluntaryists about how nasty gangs of crooks might take over, keep in mind that *they already did*, that *you* are condoning that, that *you* are making it happen, and that *your* crappy belief system is the only reason it continues to happen, or is able to happen at all. Way to go.

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[voluntaryism \(/trending/voluntaryism\)](/trending/voluntaryism)

[warlords \(/trending/warlords\)](/trending/warlords)

[oppression \(/trending/oppression\)](/trending/oppression)

[authority \(/trending/authority\)](/trending/authority)